

FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

04-219

Orleans

EAS.1304

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town/City: EASTHAM

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): North Eastham

Address: 415 North Sunken Meadow Road

Historic Name: Ralph and Lucy Doble House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling House

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

Date of Construction: [1926-1929]

Source: Deed research, *Dunham's 1929 Eastham (Mass.) Street Directory*.

Style/Form: Craftsman

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Unknown (possibly piers)

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Outbuilding with lean-to roof (Photo 3, mid-20th c.)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

None on record

Condition: Good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

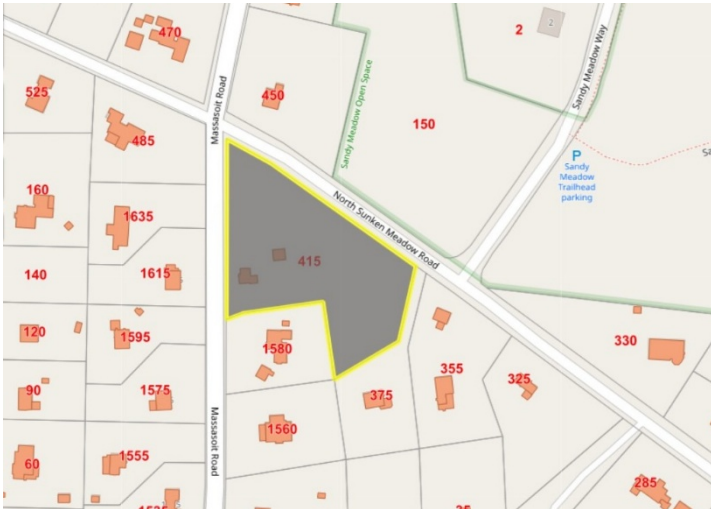
Acreage: 1.19 acres

Setting: This large parcel is bordered by North Sunken Meadow Road to the north and Massasoit Road to the west. The parcel is left largely in a wooded state with scrub pine and oak. The cottage is located on and set close to Massasoit Road. The surrounding area includes modest houses, most dating from the mid- to late-20th century.

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant, for

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): April 2025

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

ROAD

EASTHAM

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

The Ralph and Lucy Doble House, built in ca. 1926-29, is an intact example of a modest, early-20th century Craftsman cottage. The one-story cottage has a broad, L-shaped footprint, with a rear ell (see Assessor sketch, Figure 1). The foundation material is unknown, but the use of skirt boards may be obscuring foundation piers. The elevations are clad in painted wood shingles with plain cornerboards. The shallow-pitched gable roofs are clad in asphalt shingles, and they have projecting eaves with exposed rafter tails capped by fascia boards, typical of Craftsman cottage construction. Fenestration includes wood, single-glazed, 2/2 double-hung sash which may be early or original to the cottage. The gable-front elevation is two bays wide and has an off-centered entrance with a replacement door.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

Incorporated as Nauset Plantation in 1646, and changed to Eastham in 1651, Eastham territory originally extended south to Pleasant Bay and north beyond Wellfleet Harbor. The early development pattern for what we now know as Eastham was impacted by its absence of deep-water harbor facilities. Relatively fertile soil led to dispersed agricultural settlement, but residential and commercial development was concentrated to the north at Wellfleet Harbor and to the south at Town Cove and Pleasant Bay. When the separate towns of Wellfleet and Orleans were created in the late-18th century, Eastham became and remained one of the least populated towns on the Cape throughout the 19th century.

In the 19th century, Eastham was the agricultural center of the Outer Cape. Crops evolved over time; corn and dairy were surpassed in the early-20th century by asparagus and turnips - two crops well suited for the sandy soil. In 1900, 58% of Eastham's workers were employed as farmers, but by 1930 that number had dwindled to 21%. Summer resort development, including cottage colonies and subdivisions of former farmland that would transform Eastham, had begun in earnest in the 1920s as middle-class access to car ownership increased and Cape roads were improved.

The Ralph and Lucy Doble House, built in ca. 1926-29, was built on land that was originally part of the extensive farmland holdings of Joseph M. Dill, Jr. and his half-brother, Samuel A. Nickerson. Joseph Dill, Jr. had inherited the ca. 1733 Dill-Nickerson farmhouse at 1965 Massasoit Road (EAS.91) from his father. Joseph M. Dill, Jr. married Truro native Sara Etta Freeman in 1905. The 1910 census lists Dill as a farmer living with his wife, his niece Celia A. Dill, and his half-brother Samuel A. Nickerson, who worked with him on the farm. By 1920, Dill and Nickerson were farming asparagus.

This cottage was built on a small parcel of land sold in 1926 by Sarah E. and Joseph M. Gill, Jr. and Samuel A. Nickerson to Ralph E. Doble of Boston.¹ It was Doble who built this cottage for seasonal use. There appears to be an unusual connection between the buyers and sellers. Ralph E. Doble's wife, Lucy M. (Barnard) (1864-1931) had been married to Samuel A. Nickerson. They had married in Wellfleet in 1881. But as noted above, by 1910 Samuel A. Nickerson was living with the Gills and Lucy's whereabouts at that time are unclear. They appear to have divorced. By the 1920 census, Lucy was married to Ralph E. Doble (b. 1881) and they were living in Boston where he worked as a house painter. The divorce was seemingly amicable since Nickerson and the Gills sold her and her new husband land near them in North Eastham. The cottage was in place by 1929, at which time they were listed as seasonal homeowners in *Dunham's 1929 Eastham (Mass.) Street Directory*. Lucy died in 1931, and that same year Ralph remarried.

¹ Barnstable County Registry of Deeds, Book 446/ Page 400.

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In 1938, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) began a series of periodic aerial photographic surveys of Cape Cod. In that first aerial survey, this cottage is shown as one of a small number of cottages and houses along Massasoit Road at a time when the area still displayed the open setting of its agricultural uses (Photo 4). That same year, Ralph and his second wife, Frances, were living in Boston when they sold this parcel, now with reference to a cottage, to Ethel Verna Homer of Somerville, MA.² In 1945, Homer sold two parcels of land, one with this cottage, to George A. and Anna A. Mullins of Medway, MA.³ The next year, the Mullins bought additional surrounding land that now stretched to North Sunken Meadow Road, by which time he was listed living in North Eastham. In 1949, the Mullins sold this now larger parcel of land with this cottage to Elsie K. and John M. Dunne of Newington, CT.⁴

In 1973, then widowed Elsie Dunne, now living on Massasoit Road (presumably in this cottage), sold this property to James F. Dawson of New Britain, CT.⁵ In 1977, they recorded a six-lot subdivision with this cottage shown on Lot 1 (Figure 2). In 1980, Lot 1 with this cottage and Lot 5 were conveyed outright to James Dawson, who continues to own it.⁶

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES1910 Map, *Atlas of Barnstable County*, Boston, MA: Walker Litho. & Publishing Co., 1910.

Barnstable County Registry of Deeds. Deeds, Land Court Records, and Subdivision Maps.

Barnstable Patriot Archives. Sturgis Library Digital Newspaper Archive,
<https://digital.olivesoftware.com/Olive/APA/Sturgis/#panel=home>.*Dunham's 1929 Eastham (Mass.) Street Directory*.

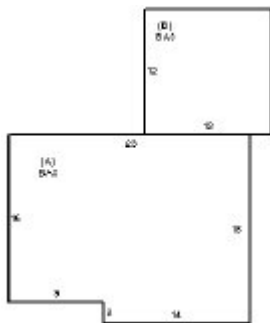
Massachusetts Historical Commission. "Reconnaissance Survey Report: Eastham." Typescript, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston, 1984.

Town of Eastham Tax Commitment Books. 1902-57.

United States Geological Survey. Aerial Survey 1938-2020,

<https://www.capecodcommission.org/our-work/cape-cod-chronology-viewer/>,
www.ancestry.com - Vital records.

Photo 2. View from Massasoit Road, looking northeast.



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Photo 3. View from Massasoit Road, looking east.



Photo 4. Detail of 1938 USGS aerial survey (arrow to cottage added).

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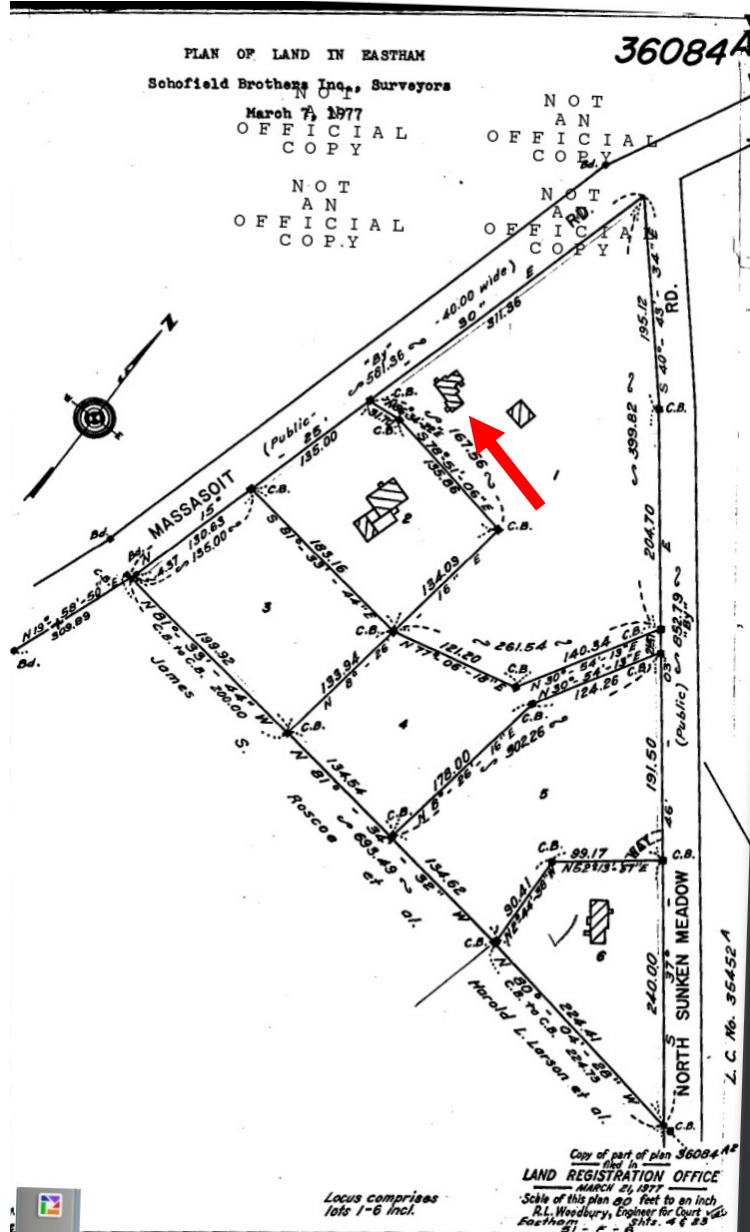


Figure 2. 1977 subdivision plan, Land Court Plan No. 36084-A (arrow to cottage added).